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LETTER DATED 30 OCTOBER 1997 FROM THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN OF THE SPECIAL COMMISSION ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 9 (b) (i) OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 687 (1991) ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The purpose of the present letter is to advise you, and through you, the members of the Security Council, of the following events:

At 0300 hours on 30 October (New York time), the United Nations aircraft carrying UNSCOM and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) personnel from Bahrain to Baghdad landed at Habbaniyah airfield, north-west of Baghdad. When Iraqi officials became aware of the nationality of the United Nations staff on board the aircraft, they advised UNSCOM officials present at the airfield that the three officials who were of United States nationality would not be allowed to enter Iraq.

Two of those officials were officers of UNSCOM; one was an officer of IAEA. I was contacted by telephone through Baghdad at 0320 hours and advised of the situation. I instructed the three officials to return with the aircraft to Bahrain. The IAEA official had been instructed by the Agency that in an eventuality such as this one, he should also leave.

This decision by Iraq was taken some eight hours following the adoption by the Security Council of the presidential statement of 29 October 1997 (S/PRST/1997/49). Iraq's action departs from and extends the measures foreshadowed in the letter of 29 October from Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz to you (S/1997/829), which referred to Iraq's demand that officers of United States nationality leave Iraq within seven days beginning at 1700 hours 29 October (New York time). No mention was made of action to prevent the entry into Iraq of United Nations officials of United States nationality prior to the expiration of that period, specified by Iraq.

I would be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Richard BUTLER

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